

VOTE ON HARRIS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Harris nomination?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 48, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 209 Ex.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Manchin	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tester
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Hagerty	Romney
Blackburn	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	Young
Graham	Portman	
Grassley	Risch	

NOT VOTING—6

Blunt	Cruz	Murkowski
Cornyn	Merkley	Van Hollen

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUATEMALAN ATTORNEY GENERAL MARIA CONSUELO PORRAS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, many hoped that President Giammattei would reject the corruption and impunity that his predecessors institutionalized. The reappointment of Attorney General Porras, who according to the State Department has “repeatedly obstructed and undermined anti-corruption investigations,” shows that it is business as usual.

Democracy cannot survive without an independent judiciary, which Attorney General Porras has sought to dismantle by persecuting prosecutors and judges who have stood up for the principle that no one is above the law. As long as this continues, Guatemala's government is not a serious anti-corruption partner of the United States.

BETA TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, a person wandering up Church Street or jogging down on the shores of Lake Champlain on a crisp, snowy day in Burlington, VT, this past winter could have glanced up at the sky and seen an angular, white aircraft gliding through the air. It is called the *Alia* and is an electric aircraft modeled after an Arctic tern that has been designed and manufactured by Beta Technologies.

At their headquarters, located beside the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, Beta Technologies has been “quietly” revolutionizing the aviation industry by designing an environmentally friendly, rechargeable, and, yes, quiet, electric aircraft that can vertically take off and land without a runway. It is incredible technology that has game-changing applications for the domestic shipping industry, private transportation, and the military. Their research, production, and testing has been supported by dozens of private investors, several public companies, and funding appropriated by the Appropriations Committee to the Air Force's AFWERX Agility Prime program. The Agility Prime program was launched in 2020 in an effort to encourage private commercial development of the electric vertical takeoff and landing—eVTOL—aircraft industry.

I am proud of the innovative work that Beta Technologies does in Vermont. The company employs a workforce of over 350 employees and is growing, employing veterans, pilots, engineers, and technicians. The company is enriching the engineering and technology community of Vermont. I am excited about the potential for Beta's aircrafts and look forward to supporting their work in the future.

On April 16, 2022, The New York Times published an article on the innovative work of Beta Technologies, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 16, 2022]

THE BATTERY THAT FLIES

(By Ben Ryder Howe)

KITTY HAWK.—The invention of the jet engine. And on a frozen Vermont morning, circling above Lake Champlain, the *Alia*.

In the mind of Christopher Caputo, a pilot, each moment signals a paradigm shift in aviation. “You're looking at history,” Mr. Caputo said recently, speaking from the cockpit of a plane trailing the *Alia* at close distance. It had an exotic, almost whimsical shape, like an Alexander Calder sculpture, and it banked and climbed in near silence.

It is, essentially, a flying battery. And it represented a long-held aviation goal: an aircraft with no need for jet fuel and therefore no carbon emissions, a plane that could take off and land without a runway and quietly hop from recharging station to recharging station, like a large drone.

The *Alia* was made by Beta Technologies, where Mr. Caputo is a flight instructor. A five-year-old start-up that is unusual in many respects, the company is the brainchild of Martine Rothblatt, the founder of Sirius XM and pharmaceutical company United Therapeutics, and Kyle Clark, a Harvard-trained engineer and former professional hockey player. It has a unique mission, focused on cargo rather than passengers. And despite raising a formidable treasure chest in capital, it is based in Burlington, Vt., population 45,000, roughly 2,500 miles from Silicon Valley.

A battery-powered aircraft with no internal combustion has been a goal of engineers ever since the Wright brothers. Larry Page, the Google co-founder, has been funding electric plane start-ups for over a decade. Electric motors have the virtue of being smaller, allowing more of them to be fitted on a plane and making it easier to design systems with vertical lift. However, batteries are heavy, planes need to be light, and for most of the last century, the e-plane was thought to be beyond reach.

That changed with the extraordinary gains in aviation technology realized since the 1990s. Late last year, curious about the potential of so-called green aviation, I flew in a Pipistrel Alpha Electro, a sleek new Slovenian two-seater designed for flight training. The Electro looks and flies like an ordinary light aircraft, but absent the roar of internal combustion, its single propeller makes a sound like beating wings. “Whoa!” I exclaimed when its high-torque engine caused it to practically leap off the runway.

However, the Electro's power supply lasts only about an hour. After ours nearly ran out, I wondered how many people would enjoy flying in an electric plane. That take off is fun. But then you do start to worry about the landing.

Despite the excitement about e-planes, the Federal Aviation Administration has never certified electric propulsion as safe for commercial use. Companies expect that to change in the coming years, but only gradually, as safety concerns are worked out. As that process occurs, new forms of aviation are likely to appear, planes never seen before outside of testing grounds. Those planes will have limitations as to how far and fast they can fly, but they will do things other planes can't, like hover and take off from “runways in the sky.”

They will also, perhaps most importantly for an industry dependent on fossil fuels, cut down on commercial aviation's enormous contribution to climate change, currently calculated as 3 to 4 percent of greenhouse gases globally.

“It's gross,” Mr. Clark said. “If we don't, the consequences are that we'll destroy the planet.”